1: Cunningham G-3 (1846-47) 1854 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

ment has in some respects been a very decided benefit; for although they may now pay *directly* a larger amount than formerly to the state, yet indirectly they pay a less sum, as there is now only *one* duty throughout the country, in place of the numerous charges which were formerly exacted by all the district *Kahlons* and petty *Gyalpos*. They have also the advantage of excellent roads, which is a benefit duly appreciated by a people whose principal means of livelihood are derived from the transport of merchandise. For these good roads, as well as for the almost complete extinction of theft, the Ladákis are indebted to the active zeal of Zoráwar Sing and his successors. Such are some of the advantages which have resulted from the conquest of the country by an energetic people.

VI.—POSTAL ESTABLISHMENT.

The postal arrangements throughout Ladák are simple and effective; but the transmission is generally slow. The *Goba* of each village is bound to furnish a courier to carry the post from his own to the next village on the road. Along the high-roads the couriers are all horsemen, *Tázampa*,* and the post is carried at the rate of from twenty to thirty-five miles a day. The former is the usual rate; the latter is the express rate when any government business is urgent. Thus letters sent from Kashmir usually reach Lé, a distance of 220 miles, in ten days; but when the despatch is urgent, it generally reaches in six days.

All officers of government make use of the village couriers for the conveyance of orders or intelligence;

* *rTá-zam-pa*, "horse-bridge."

1; Cunningham G-3 (1846-47) 1854 AJ4 W_Tibetans AJ4

205 but merchants always send special couriers of their own. The poorer classes have no correspondence; and the limited intercommunications of the upper classes, amongst whom each family has generally one member in government employ, are all conveyed by the Tá-zampas.

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER VI.

TOWNS.

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The principal villages of Láhaul are Kyelang, Kardong and Kolang. Kyelang is situated on the main trade route beween the Rohtáng and Bára Lácha passes, on the right bank of the river Bhága about four miles above its junction with the Chandra. Here a post office is maintained during the summer months, and a Moravian mission has been for some years established. The mission-house is a substantial residence, the lower apartment of which is used as a chapel. A school supported by a grant from the Government is managed entirely by the Missionaries.* Kardong lies on the left bank of the Bhága almost immediately opposite Kyelang, and is spoken of by Capt. Harcourt as at once the largest and most striking village in the valley. The houses are better built than in other villages. Kolang, which is the residence of the Thákur of Láhaul, is also situated in the Bhága valley, on the right bank about ten miles above Kyelang. The largest village probably in Spiti is Rangrig on the right bank of the Spiti river. The name is said to mean town. Dankar, the capital of Spiti, is a large village, 12,774 feet above the sea, built on a spur or bluff which stands out into the main valley and ends in a precipice. The softer parts of this hill have been worn away, leaving blocks and columns of a hard conglomerate, among which the houses are perched in curious and inconvenient positions. On the top of a hill is a large house known as the fort, which, with some cultivated land attached, belongs to Government. On a point of the hill lower down is a large monastery. The aspect of the whole place is very picturesque. It has been the seat of Government of the country from time immemorial.

* Capt. Harcourt pays a high tribute of admiration to the zeal and energy of the Missionaries, Mr Beyler and Mr. Heyde, and acknowledges the important services rendered by them to the administration. They are looked up to as friends and protectors by every inhabitant of the valley, though in the matter of conversions to Christianity they have had but little success.

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2: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

Camp is made at night wherever there are water and grass. The men lie out in rock cairns. Their heavy woolen clothes are their night clothes too. They sleep on the ground, and are gone in the morning when the sky first turns to gray. They streak across high basins on a fast canter, climb the steepest pass with hardly a pause, and walk downhill, leading the saddle ponies.

I had seen my first Tibetans at Patseo—men, women, and boys in charge of salt caravans. As I related earlier, I saw my first armed and fast-riding Tibetans at Serchu. I kept seeing them day after day, going like the wind on their tiny ponies, taking short cuts across uncharted mountains, or eating their *sattu* and drinking their *gur gur cha* at their camps on sparsely green meadows. They would always be gone by daylight, moving fast and mysteriously, covering more ground in a day than we would often cover in three with our pack train. They had none of the conveniences of travel—no air mattresses, no tents, no canned food, no medical kit. But they could go with the wind, be swallowed up in deep canyons, streak like lightning along a high ridge, climb to the steepest pass, pick their way down rocky defiles, and shortly be cantering across a basin remote and isolated from all trails.

That is the way postmen in Ladakh have traveled from time immemorial. The head of each village furnishes a carrier to carry the mail from his village to the next one. And so it goes on horseback, twenty to thirty-five miles a day and, in emergencies, even farther.

That is the way I want to travel Central Asia. Being bogged down with a pack train has its disadvantages.

I briefly experienced that kind of travel when Tashi took us out of Koksar. I rode most of the way from Gundala to Kyelang, keeping ahead of the pack train, racing along the narrow trail that threads along the Chandra. My pony and I traveled fast, and I felt for once the joy of a good horse under me and Central Asia and its vast reaches out in front.

Most of the way to Leh, Rahul and I traveled with the mule

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

the Sindh valley narrowing and just make out the snow-covered crest of a mountain which barred its upper end and indicated the site of the pass, about which we must say a few words.

The name Zogi La has another meaning attributed to it by the Tibetan, as well as the one just alleged, one which indicates the terrors that abound when winter holds it in its icy grip, namely the place of four demons. It is a pass of 11,500 feet, which separates Kashmir and what to many represents civilization, from the wild uplands of the Himalayas and the mysteries of the "distant morning lands" of Central Asia. Though its altitude is not very high for a pass, only equalling that of Leh, its difficulties are great. The summer road should be open from 15th May to 15th November, for on those dates the rates of transport alter from the high winter ones indicating coolie porterage only, to the lower summer ones of pony transport. In winter the difficulties are often insuperable owing to soft snow, blizzards and biting winds, and often the mails are delayed two or three weeks before the runners dare attempt the crossing, the telegraph wires themselves not infrequently breaking with the weight of snow. Traffic is at a standstill from mid-December to early March, save for adventurous travellers who, even then, it is stated, get themselves carried over in baskets on the backs of coolies, sturdy inhabitants of the villages bordering the Ladak side of the pass. In the centre of the Zogi La is a rest-house, often up to the eaves in snow, called Machoi, situated on the top of a small sharp hill, one side of which is sheltered from the prevailing winds, and has two or three small buildings, a serai and a telegraph office nestling under it. The telegraph master must have a dreary time in winter, and in the middle of May is moved to another post higher up on the road to Leh. The winter of 1924–5 was exceptionally mild and very little snow fell on the pass. April in Kashmir was a very hot month, more like June, and it was expected that the pass